



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF
FISH & GAME**
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE
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STATE OF ALASKA

CENTRAL REGION

Dept. of Fish & Game
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Seabird Avoidance Regulations

Federal regulations (50 CFR 679.24) require certain commercial hook and line fishing vessels to use seabird avoidance measures to reduce the incidence of seabird bycatch. Regulation **5 AAC 28.055**, adopts by reference the federal regulations and **requires seabird avoidance measures in all longline fisheries for groundfish in state waters**. This affects previously exempt vessels in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet state waters fisheries for sablefish, parallel Pacific cod, and miscellaneous groundfish. Vessels fishing for IFQ halibut in state waters were previously covered under the federal regulations. The new regulations are summarized below. The full text of the federal rule is available at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/frules/fr1930.pdf>

Seabird Avoidance Plan

All vessels greater than 26 feet length overall (LOA) are required to have a current, signed seabird avoidance plan on board and are required make it available for inspection. A plan template can be downloaded from the NMFS website at:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/torilines/form.pdf>

Seabird Avoidance Gear

The type of avoidance gear required depends on vessel size. Most vessels over 32 feet are required to use "streamer lines", also called tori lines or bird scaring lines. There are specific design requirements and performance standards for the lines. Detailed information, including diagrams can be found at the NMFS website: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/guide.htm>

While fishing for groundfish with longline gear in state waters of Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound vessels must have on board, make available for inspection, and use while deploying longline, the following gear:

Vessel LOA (feet) and type	Avoidance Gear
Under 26	none
26 – 55 without masts or rigging	Minimum of 1 buoy bag line
26 – 32 with masts or rigging	Minimum of 1 buoy bag line
32 – 55 with masts or rigging	Minimum of a single streamer line
Over 55	Minimum of a single streamer line

Exceptions: In winds over 45 knots, use of gear is optional.

Other Requirements

In addition to the required seabird avoidance plan and gear, the regulations specify that fish waste (offal) must be discharged aft of the hauling station or on the opposite side of the vessel. All hooks must be removed from the offal. No offal or residual bait may be intentionally discharged while setting gear.

All groundlines must be weighted and setting gear at night or using a lining tube (a device that deploys gear underwater) does not exempt the vessel from use of seabird avoidance gear.

Obtaining Seabird Avoidance Gear

While supplies last, free streamer lines are available at the following locations. It is important to contact them by telephone to arrange receipt of the lines.

THE AUCTION BLOCK
770 FISH DOCK ROAD #7
HOMER, AK 99603
Phone: 907-235-7267

RESURRECTION BAY SEAFOODS
200 LOWELL POINT ROAD
SEWARD, AK 99664
Phone: 907-224-3366

For additional information on Cook Inlet or Prince William Sound groundfish regulations, contact ADF&G in Homer, at 907-235-8191 or in Cordova at 907-424-3212.

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